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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Library and

Office of Budget and Finance

Washington 25, D. C.

December 1, 1943

LIBRARY CIRCULAR NO. 8,  
Supplement No. 1

BUDGET AND FINANCE CIRCULAR 729

Subscriptions to Publications

In his letter dated November 2, 1943, (decision B-37388) the Comptroller General has ruled, ". . . it may be held that the authority given the Department of Agriculture by the act of March 4, 1909, to pay in advance for subscriptions to any publications . . . is not restricted to the payment of subscriptions for one-year periods. Consequently, where it is advantageous for the purpose of economy or otherwise to subscribe for longer periods, payment for such subscriptions may be made from such current appropriations as may be otherwise available therefor."

In order to make full use of the advantages of this ruling and to secure the advantages of calendar year subscriptions, the following procedures are recommended:

1. All subscriptions which are to be continuing orders should be placed on a calendar year basis the next time they are ordered. Since many publishers will not accept orders for less than a year, subscriptions starting at any time other than the beginning of a calendar year should be placed to run to the end of the next calendar year so that they will automatically come up for renewal at the end of a calendar year. (Publications ordered for more than one year, as provided in paragraphs 2, 3, and 4, should also end at the end of a calendar year.)
2. Publications which offer reduced rates for longer than one year subscriptions may now be ordered for the most economical subscription period.
3. Publications offering as premiums other publications which would otherwise be purchased separately may now be ordered for the period required to obtain such premiums when that is the most economical way to secure subscriptions to both publications.
4. Publications the list price of which is less than three dollars a year, even though no reduction is offered for longer than one year subscriptions, may be ordered for up to five years in advance in order to reduce the amount of order work, bookkeeping, etc., involved in these small annual items.

The Library will be glad to place the orders for the most economical period, if, in preparing the AD-244 (Request for Purchase of Publications), the bureau will indicate the date on which the subscription is to begin and will note "order for most advantageous period". In such cases, the copy of the order sent to the bureau will serve to notify the originating office of the period for which the subscription was placed and the total cost of the subscription.

If, for any reason, a publication on order is no longer needed, the bureau should promptly ask the Library to cancel the subscription and request such refund as may be due.

Ralph Shaw  
Librarian

E. H. Garrison  
Acting Director of Finance

Index entries:

PAYMENTS, advance, for subscriptions to periodicals  
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